

North Carolina also offers tuition assistance to members of its National Guard, including in-state rates for out-of-state residents. State employees who have been deployed receive the difference in pay between their military and state pay, and there is a state tax exemption for pay when in a combat zone.

Family support programs are a hallmark of North Carolina's initiatives, including Operation Reaching Out To Children (ROTC) where 133 banks across the state provide toll-free financial counseling. Local efforts are also key, such as the Jacksonville-Onslow County Project Community Action Readiness Effort that provides emergency vehicle and home repair, childcare assistance, transportation and interpreter services.

The military sector contributes more than \$18 billion to North Carolina's economy each year. In addition to the National Guard and Reserve, North Carolina is home to six major military installations and the Coast Guard Station in Elizabeth City, which is now under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. North Carolina is also home to more than 772,000 veterans and 74,000 military retirees.

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